

Tobacco Health Disparities Update

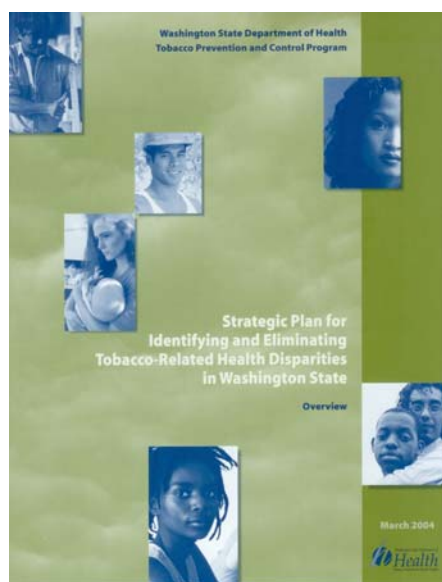
News from the Washington State Department of Health
Tobacco Prevention and Control Program

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Washington State's efforts to reduce the gaps in tobacco-use rates

Reducing the gaps in tobacco-use rates between the general population and specific population groups has been a priority for the Department of Health since tobacco prevention efforts were expanded seven years ago. Identifying and eliminating tobacco-related disparities is one of the four central goals of *A Tobacco Prevention and Control Plan for Washington State* (1999).



To achieve that goal, the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program developed and put into practice its *Strategic Plan for Identifying and Eliminating Tobacco-Related Health Disparities in Washington State* (2004). The plan identifies six goals for reducing tobacco-related disparities, and describes comprehensive and integrated approaches to achieving each of them.

The approaches generally fall within two broad categories. Some activities are intended to change the way systems function – within the department and other agencies and organizations – so they are more effective in addressing health disparities. These include such things as data collection improvements and improving the cultural competency of an organization's staff and policies.

Community-based activities are planned and conducted by community members and organizations within affected communities. This work can include culturally and community-specific activities such as leadership training, educational and outreach activities and materials, advocacy, and community mobilization.

The program's efforts are guided two advisory committees: the Tobacco Disparities Advisory Committee and Implementation Advisory Committee. Both have members who are from culturally diverse and underserved communities, and/or are experts in addressing health disparities and cultural competency.

This issue of *Disparities Update* highlights many of the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program's activities to reduce disparities in tobacco use.

Did You Know ...

The adult smoking rate in Washington is among the lowest in the nation. Yet when smoking rates are looked at by gender, race and ethnicity, level of education, disability, geographic location, and sexual orientation, disparities in smoking rates become apparent.



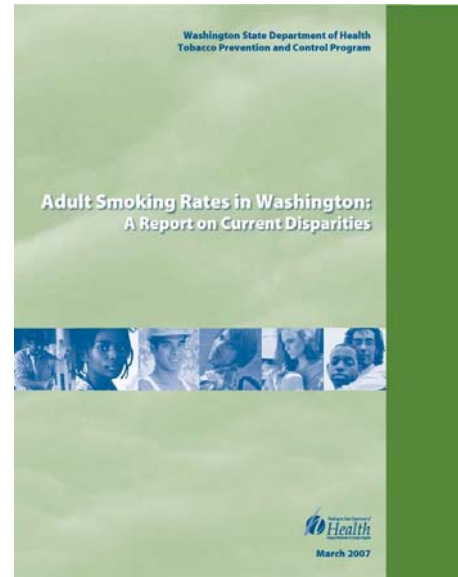
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Improving Tobacco Program performance

Data collection

The Washington State Department of Health gathers statewide data on tobacco use annually through the state *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System* (BRFSS) – a random dial phone survey conducted year-round. In the past, small population sizes and data-gathering resources made it difficult to accurately describe smoking rates among some groups. More recently, steps have been taken to produce more accurate data regarding disparities in tobacco use. These steps include:

- Increasing the number of people surveyed (over-sampling) among black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino/Hispanic population groups.
- Adding a sexual orientation question to the survey.
- Conducting the survey in Spanish, if requested by the respondent.
- Developing a series of reports that focus on specific aspects of gaps in tobacco use rates. The first of these, *Adult Smoking Rates in Washington: A Report of Current Disparities*, will be released in March 2007.



Cultural competency

The Tobacco Program recently assessed its performance using the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards developed by the federal Office of Minority Health. The assessment was conducted using an email survey of all program contractors, focus groups with the program's advisory committees, and individual interviews with program staff.

Findings from the CLAS assessment will be used to improve the cultural competency of the program's procedures, training, materials development, and interactions with local contractors and other stakeholders. To date, the program has provided staff and contractor trainings on cultural competency, culture of poverty, racism, and oppression, with many others planned.

Several steps have also been taken to improve cultural competency of the state's Tobacco Quit Line, including improved staff training, expansion of available language services, and racial and ethnic diversification of quit coaches.

Collaborating to improve cessation policies and resources statewide

The Tobacco Program collaborates with other agencies and programs to ensure cessation efforts reach those with the highest rates of tobacco use. The Tobacco Program:

- Is piloting efforts in Pierce County that will teach Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, and Early Head Start staff how to intervene with parents and household members who use tobacco.
- Assisted the Washington Department of Health First Steps Program (Maternal Support Services) in training staff statewide on brief cessation intervention techniques, and in developing a performance standard to ensure First Steps clients who smoke are



encouraged to quit. Additionally, a new campaign will begin in Spring 2007 to help pregnant and post-partum mothers quit smoking.

- Supported the Washington Department of Social and Health Services Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse in training chemical dependency staff to provide brief cessation intervention to clients, and help their facilities become smoke-free.
- Helped the Washington State Department of Corrections make state prisons smoke-free.
- Partners with the state diabetes program to support the Washington State Diabetes Collaborative, a project that is helping more than 100 health care facilities statewide change the way they treat chronic diseases. The Tobacco Program funds scholarships for low income and tribal clinics to help them participate in the Collaborative and receive training in brief tobacco cessation techniques.

Community outreach

Partnering with diverse and underserved communities

Since 2003, the Tobacco Program has awarded nearly \$2 million annually in contracts to 26 tribes and five organizations representing underserved communities – African American; Asian Pacific Islander; Latino/Hispanic; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender; and Urban Indian. The funds are provided to organizations serving each community so they may develop and conduct community-specific approaches to address their tobacco use disparities.

The Tobacco Program supports this work by providing free leadership and other types of training, and developing culturally appropriate tobacco prevention and cessation materials, youth-oriented tobacco prevention activities and trainings, and television and other media tailored to specific cultures and populations.



Culturally and linguistically appropriate media

The Tobacco Program has worked with its five cross-cultural and tribal contractors to raise awareness about secondhand smoke and the availability of cessation resources, such as the state Tobacco Quit Line, in communities where reducing tobacco use has not always been a top priority.

Through this partnership, the communities have developed effective and culturally appropriate paid, grassroots, and earned media campaigns for African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino, Lesbian/Bay/ Bisexual/Transgender, Urban Indian, and Tribal populations.

Campaign materials include flyers, postcards, magnets, hand fans, rubber bracelets, mint boxes, and other promotional items that are being used at community events such as the

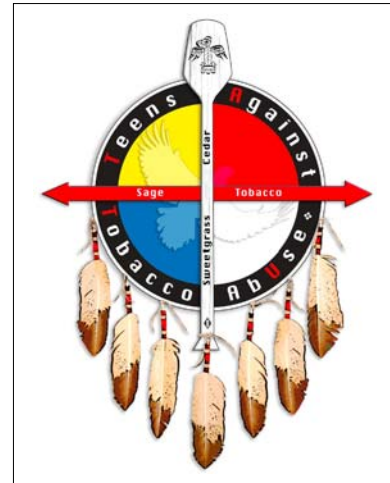
Inter-Tribal Canoe Journey, Seattle Pride Festival, and International District Summer Festival. Some communities have developed concepts in various languages and used them in paid advertising on buses, radio stations, and in community newspapers.

Culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and materials

The Tobacco Program supports collaborations with underserved communities to develop culturally appropriate programs, such as adaptations of the American Lung Association's *Teens Against Tobacco Use* (TATU) peer education program for American Indian and Latino youth. The recently completed curriculum for American Indians is called *Teens Against Tobacco abUse*, and will ensure American Indian youth receive culturally relevant training so they can educate other members of their communities.

Efforts are underway to adapt the American Cancer Society's *Speak Out!* youth leadership training for American Indian and other culturally diverse communities. Once youth complete training activities, the Tobacco Program helps them develop Youth Action Teams to work on tobacco issues in their communities.

Additionally, a variety of materials have been produced by the Tobacco Program and its contractors in various languages, including information and signs related to the expanded state Clean Air Indoor Air Act, and signs and stickers prohibiting smoking on school property.



For more information about the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program's efforts to address disparities, visit www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco/disparities/disparity.htm.



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